

in its recount order as an example of arbitrariness.

Immediately after Gore, conceded the election to Bush, The Miami Herald began to evaluate what might have happened if the U.S. Supreme Court had not stopped the recount of undervotes.

Florida is one of the few states that permit members of the public to examine ballots after they've been cast. The Miami Herald and the BDO Seidman accounting firm began examining ballots on Dec. 18. USA TODAY joined the project in January. The last undervote ballot was examined March 13.

Florida law requires that political parties be notified of ballot inspections. The Republican and Democratic parties took different approaches to the three months of ballot inspections.

The Democrats took a hands-off approach. They rarely showed up at election offices during the evaluation. "We want to see what you find. It's not our role to be at the table with you," Tony Welch spokesman for the Florida Democratic Party, said during the newspapers' study. "If we're spinning and the Republicans are spinning, people won't believe the result."

He said at the time that the party expected the outcome would show that Gore receive more votes than Bush.

By contrast, the Republicans attended every ballot inspection. They devoted hundreds of days of staff and volunteer time. The party delayed cutting its post-election staff of field directors from 12 to 6 so it could staff the ballot inspections. Some Republicans took meticulous notes on the contents of the ballots. Others just watched. The Republican Party of Florida published a daily internal memo called "Reality Check," which critiqued the media efforts to examine ballots.

In an interview before the results were released, Mark Wallace, a Republican lawyer assigned to critique the media inspections, said, "The media appear ready to offer unprecedented liberal standards for judging what is a vote. The appropriate legal standard is what was in place on Election Day: cleanly punched cards only."

Before this election, almost nothing was known by the public and by political parties about what types of marks appear on undervotes and overvotes, which make up about 2% of ballots cast nationally. The newspapers' study shows both parties predicted incorrectly which of these ballots would help them.

Democrats and Republicans noted that voter errors on punch-card voting machines were most frequent in low-income and predominantly minority precincts. Because these voters tend to vote Democratic, the disputed votes were assumed to be a rich trove of support for Gore.

Likewise, both parties noted that the 41 Florida counties that used optical-scan ballots, a system similar to standardized school tests, tended to vote Republican.

Bush supporters attacked Gore for asking for hand counts in three Democratic-leaning counties. If any hand count occurred, it should include the Republican-leaning optical-scan counties, too, the Bush supporters said.

The USA TODAY/Miami Herald/Knight Ridder study shows that the Democratic and Republican assumptions were largely wrong. The under-vote ballots actually break down into two distinct categories:

Undervotes in punch-card counties. In the 22 punch-card counties in which BDO Seidman examined undervotes, 56% of the

35,761 ballots had some kind of mark on them.

The study found that punch-card undervotes correlated less to race of party affiliation than to machine maintenance and election management. Counties that maintain machines poorly—not cleaning out chads frequently, for example—have plentiful undervotes. The study shows that when undervotes are had counted, they produce new votes for the candidates in proportions similar to the county's official vote.

For example, in Duval County, where Jacksonville is the county seat, Bush defeated Gore 58%-41%. Among the undervotes, Bush defeated Gore 60%-32% under the lenient standard and by similarly comfortable numbers under all standards. Bush picked up a net of 930 votes, including 602 dimples.

Likewise, in Miami-Dade, where Gore hoped to score big gains, he received 51% of the marked undervotes, about the same as the 52% that he got in the official count.

Undervotes in optical-scan counties. In the 37 optical-scan counties in which BDO Seidman examined undervotes, one third of 5,623 ballots had discernible votes.

The most common was when a voter made an X or check mark, rather than filling in the oval properly. Other common errors included circling the candidate's name or using a personal pencil or pen that couldn't be read by the machine. Black ink that contains even a trace of red will not register on many vote-counting machines, even when the mark appears pure black to the human eye.

The study shows that these errors were disproportionately common among Democratic voters. For example, in Orange County, home of Orlando, Gore edged Bush 50%-48% in the election. But Gore won the undervotes by 64%-33%, giving him a net gain of 137 votes. That accounted for half of the 261 votes Gore gained in optical-scan counties, which Bush won overall by 53%-44%.

The study found that optical-scan counties are the only places where Gore actually picked up more votes than Bush: 1,036 to 775 for Bush.

In the punch-card counties, where Gore had placed his hopes, his chances of winning a hand count were washed away. On dimples alone, Bush gained 1,188 votes. When all the possibilities are combined—dimples, hanging chads, clean punches—Bush outdid Gore by 8,302 to 6,559.

USA TODAY's analysis is based on accepting Bush's official 537-vote margin. This figure includes hand counts completed in Broward and Volusia counties before the U.S. Supreme Court intervened.

The newspaper also accepted hand counts completed in Palm Beach, Manatee, Escambia, Hamilton and Madison counties, plus 139 precincts in Miami-Dade.

These hand counts, which were never certified, reduced Bush's lead to 188—the starting point for USA TODAY's analysis.

The newspaper excluded these counties from its analysis. However, BDO Seidman collected data in these counties, and they are available on USATODAY.com.

In the end, Florida's presidential election remains remarkably close by any standard: 2,912,790 to 2,912,253 in the official count.

In an election this close, the winner often depends on the rules and how they are enforced.

BATAAN IS SYNONYMOUS FOR BRAVERY

(Mr. FILNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today close to the 59th anniversary of Bataan Day, April 9, 1942, to recognize the brave soldiers who were captured on this day and forced into the infamous Bataan Death March.

I was honored to travel to the Philippines a few years ago to commemorate this day with then-President Ramos.

The fall of Bataan in World War II involved the surrender of 70,000 soldiers, 12,000 of whom were Americans and 58,000 Filipinos. Many died on the death march, and those who survived were imprisoned under inhumane conditions where countless more died.

These soldiers and their comrades foiled plans for a quick takeover of the region and allowed the United States the time needed to prepare for victory in the Pacific. We can recognize their courage and bravery by passing H.R. 491, the Filipino Veterans Equity Act, which would recognize the great courage and bravery of the Filipino veterans in World War II and specifically on Bataan Day April 9, 1942.

WE MUST MAKE SURE THAT THE FUTURE IS ONE IN WHICH ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD CAN SURVIVE

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, recently the administration made the decision to set aside years of work of people from all over the world to deal with the problem of global climate change. All over the United States we have seen the evidence of change in a global climate. We have seen conditions of excessive heat in the South. We have seen tornados occur where they never occurred before. We have seen floods occur, 100-year floods occurring, every few decades and even more frequent than anyone could ever imagine.

We need to come together as a Nation and as a world to address the issue of global climate change. Man-made activities are forming and affecting our global climate, and we owe it to ourselves and to our children and to future generations to start now to do something about bringing down CO₂ levels and to do something about addressing global climate change.

It is a reality. We have to start preparing for the future, and we must make sure that the future is one in which all the people of the world can survive. America has a responsibility to the world to begin the work of cleaning up our environment.